On Resistance in Human Geography

Abstract: This paper outlines scholarship on resistance within Geography. Its contention is that conceptualisations of resistance are characterised by a *predetermination of form* that particular actions or actors must assume to constitute resistance. Asking what we risk ignoring if we only focus on predetermined, recognisable resistant forms, the paper revisits some of the fundamental assumptions (of intention, linearity and opposition) that underpin accounts of resistance. It calls for Geographers to engage with resistance in *emergence*. The paper concludes by detailing what this might look like in practice, including intersections with work on potentiality, incoherent subjects, agentic materiality and speculative futures.

Key words: resistance, power, emergence, form, intention, potentiality, opposition

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1. *Introduction*

On 21st January 2017 the streets of Washington DC filled with people marching in protest at the inauguration of President Donald J. Trump. Many of those taking part in this Women's March had travelled long distances, arriving on one of the thousands of buses bringing people to the capital from across the United States. A large number of marchers wore pink knitted 'pussy hats', a gesture to the new President's boasts of assaulting women. Whilst this mass outpouring of discontent is now considered to have contributed to the rise of the #metoo movement, the start of "sustained political resistance" against the Trump administration, at the time the protests emerged *The New York Times* commented that "no one knew whether it was a moment or a movement" (Chira 2018).

The form of this protest - a march - aligns with a conventional conceptualization of resistance within Geography: organized opposition to a particular configuration of power relations. Yet how can Geographers also account for the seemingly unremarkable practices of this day: the woman who stayed at home, opting to wear her pink hat in private; the prisoner who supported the march from her cell; the child who took part, but did not really know why? How too should Geographers recognize in our accounts of resistance that those marching could not have known the full implications of their actions? Mary Honig, coming from Virginia with her family to march "for the future. Now and the future" (Siemaszko et al. 2017) could not fully know what claim she was making *now,* nor the conditions of possibility for *future* claims that her participation in the march was creating. Take for example, the incident over a year later in September 2018, when Maria Gallagher and Ana Maria Archilla blocked Senator Jeff Flake's lift door, confronting him over his support for the Supreme Court Nominee Brett Kavanagh, accused by multiple women of sexual assault. The possibility for such an encounter may have emerged discordantly from the legacy of the Women's March, but it extends beyond those who protested in that 'moment that became a movement', to include those actions which did not cohere to an expectant resistance *form* – the private hat-wearer, the prisoner, the child - and yet their actions understood in their *emergence* are also entwined with conditioning the possibilities for such future claims to be made. How then, can Geographers engage with moments that may never congeal into a particular recognizable resistant form?

This paper's provocation is that the contemporary political moment(s) make this a productive, and pressing time to revisit the rich vein of scholarly work on resistance in Geography. However, tracing the concept of resistance within Geography reveals a paradox: resistance is everywhere, and yet, surprisingly, elusive. The paper emerges from a recognition that whilst the conceptual vocabulary for resistance is increasingly diverse and splintered, resistance 'itself' has become a totemic concept within the discipline that is rarely systematically engaged with, despite its apparent centrality to many geographical debates. There has not, for

example, been a *Progress in Human Geography* report on resistance since Sparke's (2008) report in the context of Political Geographies of globalisation. Given the decade that has elapsed since this piece, I dedicate the first part of this paper to (re)tracing two strands of thought that continue to dominate framings of resistance within the discipline: resistance as oppositional to power, and resistance as entangled with power (see Sharp et al. 2000). I demonstrate how concerns that a multiplicity of potential points of resistance will negate the political purchase of the term, have led to a *predetermination of form* that particular actions or actors must assume to constitute resistance. This apriori delineation of resistant forms has, I suggest, brought Geographical literature interrogating conceptualizations of resistance to an impasse over the last decade (for previous work see Staeheli 1994; Pile 1997; Cresswell 2000; Sharp et al. 2000; Routledge 1996, 1997; Rose 2002; Amoore 2005; Sparke 2008).

Attending to how Geographers engage with resistance is timely, for the paucity of critical engagement with the *concept* of resistance is contemporaneous with a plethora of scholarship analysing *practices* of resistance. Geographers from across disparate sub-disciplines have critically engaged with a wide spectrum of what can loosely be grouped as 'resistant' activities (e.g. activism, counter-conduct, social movements, activism, subversive tactics). In this paper, I demonstrate how these debates resonate with wider discussions in the discipline, and outline areas where scholarly discussion on the concept of resistance could be reanimated by revisiting the some of the fundamental assumptions that have come to undergird the term.

The conceptualisation of resistance is of further importance for Geography, as the discipline has focussed upon theorising power. Over the last decade, a wealth of scholarship interrogating the various and emergent multiplicities, intensities, modes, forms and genres of power has developed (Anderson 2017; see also Crampton & Elden 2007; Allen 2011; Faulconbridge 2012; Philo 2012; Meah 2014; Horvorka 2018). Tracing the trajectory of resistance cannot be separated from power, and yet crucially, the shape of such resistant forms remains delineated apriori (with the exception of Horton and Kraftl 2009). That is, the (in)actions that come to be framed as resistance, are not traced in their emergent becoming; as this paper will detail, Geographers remain wedded to particular coordinates – of intention, linearity and opposition – that serve to determine in advance what comes to be termed as resistance. Further, these developments in how power is conceived are now ontologically dissonant with prevailing understandings of resistance. It is now recognised in several areas of the discipline, (particularly within Social and Cultural Geography), that the non-human is lively and agentic (Braun and Whatmore 2010; Clark et al. 2008; Anderson and Wylie 2009; Gregson and Crang 2010). Yet, this focus upon the vitality of the non-human can serve to displace intention, which is a pivotal component of how resistance is determined in many dominant Geographical accounts (Pile 1997; Routledge 1997; Martin & Pierce 2013; Crane 2015; Nicolls 2016). How, then, does a focus upon the non-human unsettle the

assumption of an intentional, resistant subject? Can Geographers recognise and research resistance without recourse to such a pre-determined form?

In engaging with these questions, this paper should not be read as 'new theory' of resistance. Instead, I map how the concept of resistance is deployed in Human Geography, and suggest productive areas where Geographical debate on resistance could be reanimated. I make the case that it is productive for Geographers to decentre the norms shaping our framings of resistance, and in doing so move away from predetermined forms of resistance, to engaging with resistance in emergence. To be clear, I draw upon the diverse body of Geographic scholarship that *already* theorizes a politics of emergence (e.g Raynor 2017, Joronen 2017, Emmerson 2018, Pedwell 2019) and bring this work into accounts of resistance. By emergence I refer to tracing resistance in its becoming which, as I will go onto explore does not negate, nor equate, the specificity of any resultant resistant forms. There is, of course, a difference in the *form* of resistance between Mary Honig and her family who marched on Washington DC and the woman who stayed at home in her hat. The argument I put forward then, is that a framing of resistance as emergent prevents a foreclosure of emergent forces into predetermined forms (e.g. of activist, intentional subject, protest, tactic or dispute), and thereby keeps open the category of resistance to other subjects, materials, spaces and temporalities which do not always cohere to an (expected) resistant form and yet condition the possibility for future claims to be made.

With this in mind, I begin by discussing the politics of remaining with the terminology of resistance (Section 2), before outlining engagements with resistance in Geography, exploring approaches that conceive resistance as oppositional to power (Section 3), and as always-already entangled with power (Section 4). I then move to identify two interrelated logics which have come to underpin much scholarly attention in this area: first, that resistance as distributed or 'everywhere' reduces the conceptual purchase of the term, and second, that resistance requires a recognition of intention (Section 5). I illustrate the value of destabilizing these seemingly fixed coordinates of resistance for debates within Geography, arguing for a non-reductive attention to the potentiality of always-already entangled forces. I then explicitly detail what that might look like in practice (Section 6), including areas of productive intersection with Geographic scholarship on potentiality, incoherent subjects, agentic materiality and speculative futures.

2. *On remaining with 'resistance': the politics of terminology*

What is the value of expanding - and therefore shifting - resistance from form to emergence? Why rethink *resistance*? Why not neologize, or draw upon other frames of reference to productively animate discussion around a politics of emergence? The first reason that I remain with the term resistance is that it is still active within Geography, and yet, critical discussions on its use are not happening. As previously mentioned, many

terms have emerged within the broad 'umbrella' of resistance to explore particular manifestations of forces, yet the various overarching 'frameworks' of resistance remain largely uninterrogated. In the context of this expansive vocabulary, to bypass the possibility for debates on resistance on the grounds that they are redundant (or reductive), is to miss the point that Geographers *are* engaging with resistance, but that critical discussions over what we might mean by the term have largely been sidelined within the discipline over the last decade.

The second reason for (re)deploying resistance to engage with the contemporary moment is that there is a surge of activity across the world that is variously termed 'resistance'. The rise of the far-right, the decimation of the natural environment and the responses to the so-called refugee 'crisis' are illustrative of these disturbing times: revisiting debates on resistance may go some way to question how Geographers can, or should respond to the contemporary moment(s). It is imperative to state therefore that what is 'at stake' in rethinking resistance is not 'confined' to theory; arguing that resistance does not exist apriori and can be productively traced in emergence means attending to the fact that – to paraphrase Povinelli (2011) – we do not resist in the abstract.

Furthermore, resistance is a *productive* term for the emergent practices that I will turn to explore, because in expanding the potential subjects, materials, times and spaces of resistance, Geographers can give recognition to those who do not fit within apriori narratives. As I explicitly return to throughout the paper, a rethinking of *resistance* away from predetermined form is fruitful, for a foreclosure of debate into 'what counts' as resistance risks denying recognition to those involved, and shutting down the multiple possible futures that may, or may not emerge.

How then, to identify resistance as 'it' emerges through and with the forces comprising all life? Central to this question is a focus upon the *we* who recognises, encounters and/or names a particular configuration of forces as resistance. No one can presume to have the ability (nor the right) to fully prescribe what resistance might look, or feel like, for anyone else (nor indeed, our future selves). To clarify, what I am not saying here is that Geographers cannot impose resistance as a lens, a way of engaging with actions that *do* coalesce to particular forms, but instead that we need to ask different questions of our engagement with form as 'the' marker of resistance. Such an approach is also not, to reiterate, an equating of resistant forms, and the accompanying political implications of these, and nor does it refute the importance of other terms that unpack the nuances of manifestations of these forces (e.g. refusal, reworking, counter-conduct). What a rethinking of resistance as emergent does do is to push for Geographers to think about what (or whose) narratives, (in)actions and accounts we risk neglecting, or reinforcing, when we cling tightly to resistance-as-form.

Such an expansion of resistance invites the critique that bringing understandings of resistance into 'the same' vocabulary as power (Anderson 2017; Nealon 2008) risks equating power and resistance. However, there is a

political imaginary to the language of resistance within and beyond the academy. For example, within migration research, and the often intertwined activism and advocacy work alongside it, the term resistance carries an evocative and important lineage of the role of the academy in challenging hostile state immigration policies. Yet even an ostensibly non-reductive capture of emergent, potential forces into a discursive framework is performative: to name an (in)action as resistance is to attribute a particular political agenda to it, regardless of the nuances of a theoretical approach. This may prove risky for those involved; in my own research, I have explored the politics of naming the shared songs of UK immigration detainees and staff as resistance to attend to the emergent capacity of laughter to unsettle, destabilise and disrupt (Hughes 2016). To bring such moments into accounts of resistance may prove unwelcome for those involved, for it gestures to a particular – and oppositional – imaginary. In calling for a rethinking of resistance within Geography from predetermined form to emergent practices, I am not reducing power and resistance as 'the same' and as I will illustrate throughout the paper, neither am I negating the possible negative implications of the term. Instead, my argument for a rethinking of resistance beyond form is intended to reinvigorate debates on resistance within Geography and to open up our attention to more ambiguous, unremarkable and less coherent practices as resistance.

3. *Resistance as oppositional*

Resistance has traditionally been viewed as oppositional to power. Such accounts, whereby society is understood in relation to an overarching system or framework, posit power as possessed and deployed by those who control the institutions comprising the sovereign state. Many approaches to resistance have their origins in this structural shared sense of counter-movement from below, double movement, or an identity orientated approach to resistance, looking at how "collective actors strive to create the identities and solidarities that they defend" (Sharp et al. 2000, 9; see Laclau and Mouffe 1985; de Certeau 1988; Polanyi 2005; Gramsci 2007). More specifically, as Rose (2002) notes, Geography has also focused upon theorizing organized opposition; resistance *in response to* a particular configuration of power relations (see Brown 1997; Peters 1998; Routledge 1996, 1997; Martin and Pierce 2013). It is of course possible to oppose something that one is part of, but the point here is that in this literature relations of power and resistance are often conceptualised as a dualism; resistance is considered emancipatory and acts against the seemingly totalising force of hegemonic state power (Hoy 2005).

This is further developed in the influential work of Katz (2004; 2009), whose alternative categorisations of agency as resistance, reworking or resilience has had significant traction across the discipline. As Sparke (2008, 424 emphasis as original) explains, Katz "contrasts *resistance* that involves oppositional consciousness and achieves emancipatory change, with forms of *reworking* that alter the organization but not the polarization

of power relations." *Resilience* (2001) for Katz refers to endurance, persistence; the agency of individuals to take actions in order to withstand their situation. For example, in his work on the India-Bangladeshi border, Jones' (2012, 697) draws upon Katz to argue that "every action in defiance of the state or the border guards should not be understood as resistance", instead actions such as paying border guards to smuggle goods across the border, could be more productively framed as reworking or resilience to a particular situation.

Moreover, following calls in the 1990s for Geographers to "challenge social oppression… putting ourselves 'on the line' as academics, and engage with activism as academics" (Chouinard 1994, 5), the discipline has seen a rise in work on activism as a particular form of oppositional resistance directed at influencing change. Feminist scholars have "begun to expand the category of activism to include modest, quotidian acts of kindness and creativity" (Pottinger 2017, 215). Through this lens, activism does not need to be revolutionary, and is conceptualised beyond a revolutionary overthrowing of power. The broader attention to activism "beyond the militant subject" (Chatterton and Pickerill 2010, 478; see Larner and Craig 2005; Horton and Kraftl 2009) has arisen Gill (2016, 168) argues in his work on activism in the British asylum system, "partly in response to the machismo that besets notions of wholesale revolution, giving rise to a need to understand post-heroic forms of activism more clearly". Indeed, even these 'quiet' actions at the level of the everyday remain purposeful oppositional; they are action on behalf of a cause; deliberate tactics with political orientations (Pottinger 2017).

Geographers have also paid close attention to quotidian tactics of oppressed groups, utilising the work of de Certeau who proposes that many everyday practices of resistance are tactical, deployed by those who lack the backing of institutions of power, seize the "possibilities offered by circumstances" to oppose and eventually overthrow the forces oppressing them (1988, 37). These accounts have included carceral spaces (Gill et al. 2013), citizenship (Secor 2004), online mapping technologies (Elwood and Mitchell 2013) and through the 'dumpster diving' tactics of "contemporary anarchist collective, CrimethInc" (Crane 2012). Such approaches to everyday resistance that may accumulate into a larger scale event, are also often characterised by opposition and intention.

These oppositional accounts are disparate in their ontologies, empirical focus and articulation of 'resistance', and yet they all broadly resonate within a framework of resistance as oppositional to power, of resistance as "challenging oppressive power relations" (Routledge 2009, 6). Within (neo) Marxist accounts of (organised) opposition, resistance remains antonymic to power. Yet outside of an explicitly Marxist framework, this approach surfaces in how resistance is defined, researched and recognised as *oppositional*. A reframing of resistance as emergent, means that 'co-option' is always-already present; as this paper now turns to examine

framing resistance as intimately entangled with power relations means that it is not possible to be outside of power relations (Sharp et al. 2000).

4. *Resistance as always-already entangled with power*

> *"[D]omination and resistance cannot exist independently of each other, but neither can they be reducible to one another: they are thoroughly hybrid phenomena, the one always contains the seeds of the other, the one always bearing at least a trace of the other that contaminates or subverts it" (Sharp et al. 2000, 20)*

Sharp et al.'s (2000, 27) influential account of the geographies of domination/resistance, draws upon Foucault to put forward an argument for an "ambiguous, entangled view of power", deploying the term 'entanglements' to refute a separation of power and resistance. For Sharp et al. (2000, xv), resistance and domination are inherently linked: neither can "escape from the endless circulation of power." Indeed, Foucault's conceptualization of power and resistance as multiple and relational, produced by certain forms of social relationship and therefore unable to be possessed, contained or localised (1978; Allen and Cochrane 2010), has become close to an established approach within (and beyond) Geography. Within this framework "where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault 1978, 95).

For Geographers, conceptualising this relationship as 'entangled', Sharp et al. argue, brings forward a new spatial metaphor of "knotted thoughts" (2000, 1), or as Massey frames it "a ball of wool after the cat has been at it" (2000, 283). Recognizing these entangled resistant power relations may not mobilise individuals or groups in any definitive way does not disqualify these (in)actions as resistance, rather it changes the way in which resistance is recognized as a multiplicity of potential relations. This is because, for Foucault, unlike the aforementioned accounts of resistance as oppositional: "no matter how terrible a given situation may be, there always remains the possibilities of resistance, disobedience, and oppositional groupings" (2002, 354). Yet this apparent optimism is in contrast with claims made by Thrift that Foucault does not leave space for lively, agentic subjects, resulting in "a certain rather gloomy outlook" (2007, 53). Such claims of futility are important to address when thinking about the possible limitations of this approach to resistance within Geography, as Thrift (despite an acknowledgement that Foucault does leave *some* space for resistance) argues that "the overwhelming impression is, too often, of a world that has given up the ghost" (2000, 269), implicitly reinforcing resistance as intentional, linear and directed at a particular configuration of power relations.

What becomes apparent here is that debates over the nuances of Foucauldian framings of agentic subjects, serve to highlight how particular *forms* of resistance and power continue to be held apart, or in opposition, for

analysis: "*the one* always contains the seeds of *the other*" (Sharp et al. 2000, 20 my emphasis). Indeed, Sharp et al. remain with the domination/resistance couplet; for them, power is "operative in moments of both domination and resistance", a focus upon entanglements of power, uses the terminology of "*dominating* power" and "*resisting* power" (2000, 3; 20 my emphasis) to name the forms that these various relations take. Such a focus has resulted in resistance placed as proxy for power relations, a "form of power" (Bale 2000, 148); an attunement to a different force. Grounding these forces in writing becomes (as Sharp et al. (2000) reflect upon) difficult as the terms 'power' and 'resistance' imply a dualism, and entanglements of domination/resistance require the naming of a particular force: a discursive dialectic (re)emerges within this framework. Indeed, this separation of entangled forces can be traced throughout many Foucauldian inspired accounts that have emerged within Geographic literature across different sub-disciplines.

For example, in the last *Progress in Human Geography* review on resistance, Sparke (2008, 424) draws upon this entangled framework to comment that "writing on the geography of resistance is especially indicative of the widened field of political geography". Political Geography emphasizes power; there is a large and widely acknowledged body of work which conceives power to be dispersed through multiple actors; a "tangled array of forces" (Allen and Cochrane 2010, 1073; see for example Agnew 1999; Allen 2004, 2006; Hyndman 2004; Allen and Cochrane 2007; Crampton and Elden 2007; Sharp 2009). As a consequence of the development and intersection of these bodies of literature, sovereignty is now widely considered to have migrated "from states to a loosely assembled global system" (Connolly 2007, 36). This attention to the multiplicity of power relations has resulted in, as Chatterton and Pickerill (2010, 482) argue "resistance…not usually articulated against a clear figure of oppression, be it the state, capital or the global corporation." Yet whilst the 'target' of resistance has been interrogated and splintered, far less attention has been given to the multiplicity of forces of resistance within Political Geography (Sparke 2008).

Acknowledging these complex entanglements of forces, is further evident within scholarship grounded within Actor Network Theory (e.g. Pickering 1993, Latour 1997, Law 1999). Here "modern societies cannot be described without recognizing them as having fibrous, thread-like, wiry, stringy, ropy, capillary character" (Latour 1997, 370). Comparably, Geographers drawing upon the rhizomatic assemblage thinking of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and DeLanda (2016) also recognise that "assemblage connotes not a central governing power, nor a power distributed equally, but power as plurality in transformation" (Anderson and McFarlane 2011, 125). Within the scholarship that focuses upon the multiplicity of non-hierarchical *power* relations that assemblage thinking obligates, the (albeit implicit) assumption is that resistance is also splintered, multiple and non-hierarchical (Law 2002; Allen and Cochrane 2007, 2010). Yet, this flat ontology which refutes a privileging of the human, means that in our understandings of resistance we must attend to the 'vibrant materiality' that Bennett (2010) argues runs alongside humans; things have the emergent capacity to act as

quasi agents and as forces of their own. Adopting this approach does not simply mean positing 'vibrant materiality' as a frame, or form of resistance, but instead I suggest that it forces Geographers to refocus our assumptions on what constitutes resistance, and to weave the agency of materials into accounts of resistance.

Such a relational approach has had considerable traction within Urban Geography (e.g. McFarlane 2009, 2011; Shaw 2014; Jacobs 2012; Graham & Marvin 2001; Storper and Scott 2016), with McGuirk et al. (2016, 129 my emphasis) arguing that understanding the city as an assemblage, means conceiving it to be "performed, emergent and diversely constituted […] enacted in socio-material *'frictions'* and negations of the everyday." This non-hierarchical multiplicity also emerges within Wideman and Masuda's (2018, 387) account of resistance to planning interventions in Downtown Eastside in Vancouver, where they argue that an assemblage approach which engages the material is a "powerful analytic tool for uncovering the contested production of place." Such accounts of the liveliness of materials, that form new relations beyond (although not excluding) any human intention, destabilizes intention as a criteria for determining resistance apriori for, as this paper will continue to interrogate, Bennett's concept of distributed agency "does not posit a subject as the root cause of an effect" (2010, 31). This multiplies the potential for resistance into material and other non-human actors, which aligns with the concern that a multiplicity of resistant relations is a dilution of the purchase of the term, resulting in particular pre-determined coordinates (of intention, coherence, opposition) that delineate the form of resistance.

5. *Resistance-as-form: an impasse*

These two positions, of opposition and entanglement, have dominated how Geographers have conceptualised resistance. In this section, I develop my argument that these accounts have led to a predetermination of the form that particular actions must take to constitute resistance. Specifically, I show how this focus upon *form* as an apriori delineator of resistance can be traced through two logics[i] which have come to undergird many of our accounts of resistance: (1) that resistance 'everywhere' dilutes the purchase of the term, and (2) that resistance requires intention. I demonstrate how these logics arise in an impasse, before turning to decentre these fundamental assumptions about resistance through an attention to emergence, detailing how this can productively animate, and intersect with ongoing work in the discipline.

5.1 Logic 1: That resistance 'everywhere' dilutes the purchase of the term.

A focus upon entanglement can be traced throughout much Geographic scholarship on resistance since the cultural turn. Yet, literature premised upon this understanding of power and resistance continues to separate them for analysis: to *en*-twine, to *en*-tangle requires a separation; the possibility to disentangle, unravel or

untwine is inevitable within such a discursive capture. This has resulted in a wide variety of productive terms emerging to detail particular manifestations, nuances and specificities of such entanglements (e.g. counter conduct, refusal, activism) within the broader bracket of resistance. That is, with the splintering of potential sites and subjects of power and resistance, further curtailment around what 'counts' as resistance is required to prevent a romanticisation of the term. Cultural Geographer, Rose (2002, 383), explains this impasse:

> *"[T]he challenge for geographers has been to develop theories that recognize and categorize 'resistant' practice. Despite the interest that this new subfield has garnered, the challenge has created a theoretical crossroad. If we choose criteria narrowly, we risk ignoring certain forms of contradictory practice, yet, if we accept every moment of contradictory practice as an example of resistance, our concepts of resistance become devoid of any practical use".*

This "theoretical crossroad" (Rose 2002, 383), emerging from a pluralized and relational understanding of resistance, also links to longstanding concerns that resistance is becoming romanticized in its multiplicity:

> *"The discourse on resistance moved from strikes, protests, riots and the production of alternative cultures through the resistance of carnival, having fun and telling jokes to a whole plethora of unremarkable activities such as walking, eating, shopping and taking shortcuts. I do not wish to offer any definitive statement on resistance here but I will suggest a difficulty with defining certain kinds of activities, which seem to lack a crucial element of choice, as resistance." (Cresswell 1996, 422, emphasis added)*

The arguments made here state that if resistance is everywhere it becomes "increasingly meaningless", unless it assumes a particular form (Jones 2012, 687; Cresswell 1996, 2000; Ferguson and Golding 1997). As Cresswell later expands: "It is fair to say that human geography, and cultural studies even more so, have been guilty of romanticising resistance" (2000, 258). Massey echoes some of these concerns, noting that a recognition of resistance as everywhere should not mean that structural inequalities of power become lost and "dissipated in a plethora of multiplicities" (2000, 280). These narratives from the late 1990s and early 2000s continue to hold traction; the fear that Foucauldian inspired entanglements of power and resistance risks over-extending and romanticizing the term persists. These concerns are important, and yet their consequences are that the *form* that forces must take to be resistant becomes determined apriori. This means that some (in)actions, perhaps considered *unremarkable* to the observer, become excluded from being framed as resistant. In short, concerns that a multiplicity of potential points of resistance will make the term conceptually redundant, have resulted in an apriori classification of resistant forms.

An important exception to this viewpoint however, is Horton and Kraftl's paper on implicit activisms (2009). Arguing that accounts of activism in the Social Sciences have tended to "foreground and romanticize the

grandiose, the iconic, and the unquestionably *meaning*- ful, to the exclusion of different kinds of activism", Horton and Kraftl examine the closure of a UK Sure Start centre (a government initiative to support children in 'deprived' communities), to explore "a more complex, ambiguous relationship between emotion and activism" (2009, 14, 15 emphasis as original). The argument that I make in this paper for a decentering of form in our accounts of resistance, clearly aligns with Horton and Kraftl's claims which, whilst grounded within literature on activism, focus upon how "particular *kinds* of activist behaviour" can serve to "(re)produce a particular version of activism" (2009, 16, emphasis as original). In a similar vein, Chatterton and Pickerill (2010) also aim to reclaim the messiness of activism, through their work to broaden understandings of autonomous subjects in relation to post-capitalist worlds. Their research into "into the everyday lives of grassroots, non-party political activists" engaging with anti-capital moments in the UK found "an altogether more complex and often contradictory process of activist-becoming-activist through trends that include the rejection of binaries between activists and their other, an embracing of a plurality of values, a pragmatic goal orientation and a growing professionalism" (2010: 475, 479). In drawing upon Grosz' splintering of the "assumed unified activist subject" to reveal the "messy impurities" of anti-capitalist movements which are not necessarily coherent in their relationship with the multiple facets of capitalism, Chatterton and Pickerill's work (2010, 479) contributes to critiques of an assumed resistant form. I build upon the calls made by Chatterton and Pickerill (2010) and Horton and Kraftl (2009) to take seriously other ways of accounting for activism in academic scholarship, in particular their work to challenge a linear, intentional reading of activism, to rethink the work that *resistance* does (or could do) within Geography, when a focus upon form is decentered. I now turn to the most significant, and pervasive logic underpinning this attention to form, the claim that resistance requires intention.

5.2 Logic 2: That resistance requires intention

> *"I use the term 'resistance' to refer to any action imbued with intent that attempts to challenge, change or retain particular circumstances relating to societal relations, processes and/or institutions" (Routledge 1997, 360)*

The word 'intent' is derived from the Latin *intendere* (verb), or *intentus* (adjective). It means 'to stretch out, to strain' (tendere) 'towards' (in), to direct action towards a purpose (Ainsworth et al. 1823). Importantly therefore, the notion of *telos*, an end goal, is bound up with the idea of a subject acting with intent. This understanding of intent as being associated with the idea of an end goal is therefore crucial when thinking about how resistance has been conceptualised as intentional and linear, as future orientated actions are directed by a subject to resolve, at least in part, some problem of the present moment. This is not to say however, that intention is itself a binary: whilst the confines of language frame 'intention' as oppositional to '*un*intentional', subject (in)coherence is far more complex than this simple delineation of terms suggests. A destabilization of

intent is however, bound up within the dangers of romanticizing resistance; the concern that multiplying the possible points of resistance results in a dilution of the political utility and potential of the term. Focusing upon intention as an undergirding logic of accounts of resistance, highlights how apriori delineations of resistance are decoupled from theorisations of power as emergent and "lived as part of the composition of experience" (Anderson 2017, 501). The work that resistance does within Geography is, as previously mentioned, not ontologically compatible with new directions in power.

Conceptualisations of resistance within and beyond Geography have been framed by the view that 'acts of resistance' require the intention of subjects and/or a recognition of intent by a target or observer (see Cresswell 1996, 2000, Routledge 1996, 1997; Pile 1997; Jones 2012; Martin and Pierce 2013; Crane 2015; Nicholls 2016). Resistance is thus seen as a conscious practice, whereby a subject overcomes, or crucially *intends* to overcome, a particular configuration of power relations: "the person engaging in resistant acts must do so consciously and be able to relate that consciousness and intent" (Leblanc 1999, 18), in doing so a resistant subject is invoked. For example, in their work on radical democracy Martin and Peace (2013, 77 emphasis added) argue that "[r]esistance…needs to *intentionally and deliberately* employ the state to sow greater lines of contradiction within the state's neoliberal project." A *recognition* of intention within (in)action is frequently linked to scalar analysis of resistance. Scott's work on local scale, intentional actions, the "hidden transcripts of subordinate groups," has influenced much work on resistance within Geography (1990, 15). Scott privileges intent as a better indicator of resistance than the outcome of actions, because acts of resistance do not always achieve their desired effect (1990). However, Scott's (1990) argument that it is reasonable and ethical to read intent in actions has been criticised by those who note that assessing intent is difficult, if not impossible (Hollander and Einwohner 2004).

6. *Resistance as emergent*

It has been my contention throughout this paper that Geographers have reached an impasse in their engagement with resistance. Specifically, that the two aforementioned logics have come to curtail many of our accounts of resistance. I now turn to decentre these logics, demonstrating how this allows us to ask different questions of the conceptual purchase of 'resistance' within Geography. What might it mean if we took seriously in our accounts of resistance the woman who supported the Women's March from her prison cell, or the child who marched but did not really know why? I focus on resistance as an *emergent practice* – tracing resistance as 'it' comes into being – and ask what this can bring to Geographical scholarship, identifying areas of current work which could productively intersect with a rethinking of resistance (on potentiality, incoherent subjects, agentic materiality and speculative futures). To reiterate, engaging with resistance in emergence, *does not mean that form is not important,* instead I argue that we should move beyond

form as 'the' marker of resistance. I therefore pose the following questions: How do we identify resistance in emergence? What might be the political implications of doing so? And what value can such a framing bring to current debates within Geography?

6.1 Potentiality, and the politics of recognising resistance as emergent

First, a refocussing of resistance as emergent aligns with the wealth of scholarship in Geography and the Social Sciences that engages with potentiality. Potential comes from the Latin *potentia* meaning force, power or might. It refers to that which is not yet distinct, known or able to be grasped. This aligns with ontologies that explore the multiplicity of all life as shot through, and constructed by a cacophony of immanent forces (including, but not limited to, engagement with the philosophies of Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Berlant 2011; Povinelli 2010). Framed in this way, resistance is always-already present as a potentiality within the exercise of power relations. This approach encompasses the focus upon the entanglement of power and resistance that is prevalent within Geography, and yet develops it to explicitly avoid a recourse to form. One example of this resistance through the lens of potentiality is Joronen's argument for an understanding of resistance as grasping "the potentialities of that form-of-life that the setter colonial apparatuses aim to erase" (2017, 91) as a form of opposing Israeli settler colonialism in the West Bank, Palestine. Joronen (2017, 98) utilizes the work of Agamben (1998) to carefully argue for an attention to the ungovernability of the potentiality of life as a form of resistance, for it challenges the foundations upon which the settle colonial state emerges and can "hamper attempts to strip life naked: it cannot be reduced to a mere target of colonial exceptionalism and hence does not let sovereign power capture potentiality and action its ban, but rather directs potentiality and action to maintain the everyday forms-of-life."

The focus upon potentiality that Joronen (2017) brings is productive for my argument to frame resistance as emergent; in engaging with resistance through potentiality, we can move to focus upon emergence, how Geographers might conceive of resistance without resorting to particular recognizable form. This approach can further align with Geographic scholarship *already* focussing on emergence; the politics of a refusal of fixed form. The two examples that follow are from work that does not explicitly focus upon resistance, but in positioning resistance in relation to a range of literature on emergence, I demonstrate how this can offer us interesting and useful resonances for reanimating debates in this area.

Geographers engaging with austerity politics have worked to foreground emergent, everyday practices that do not cohere to overarching, governmental narratives of what austerity 'is'. Raynor (2017) developed a collaborative fictional play to unpack how a group of women in the North East of England incoherently encountered fragments of austerity. Reflecting upon their "struggles to develop a coherent plot", Raynor

(2017, 207) highlights the "fracturing of objectives and dissonant relations that become held together in austerity. There is no coherent narrative", which signals how austerity does not need to cohere to form to be accounted for as it variously emerges in everyday life. This approach also works to keep hold of the tension and ambiguity in how austerity emerges, dissipates, and is encountered (see also work by Coleman 2016; Hitchen 2016). In moving to focus upon the multiplicity of austerity and in tracing its emergence without pre-determining the subjects, materials, spaces and temporalities that it invokes, there could be productive conversations between this scholarship and a framing of resistance as an emergent practice.

Another area of constructive intersection is amid work in Geography engaging with the affectual politics of laughter. Emmerson (2017, 2082), explores the more-than-representational potential of laughter as a refrain "to generate spaces, atmospheres and subjectivities" which are contingent and can never be fully captured within prescribed (and indeed, intentional) subject form. Similarly, Sharpe et al. (2014, 116) discuss the comedy of Stewart Lee, focussing upon the "generative potential act" of humour, for it keeping questions open around the form of politics, and the cultivation of publics. They argue that Lee's comedy can be considered a micropolitical intervention in that it gestures to "an openness to the future, the shape of which is as yet unknowable" (2014, 116). In my own work in UK detention centres (Hughes 2016), I have analysed the shared laughter of detainees and staff as ambiguous moments of disruption that do not cohere to the making of a political claim and yet unsettle the smooth governance of a detention centre. These approaches align with thinking through resistance as emergent for they variously gesture to the potentiality of laughter in exceeding form. In focussing upon the affectual politics of laughter, which resonates more broadly with work on spontaneity (cf Emmerson 2018, Sivignon 2005) and also serves to decentre intentionality which I argue is fruitful for a critical re-engagement with resistance within Geography.

6.2 Incoherence, and the displacement of intention

Conceptualising resistance as emergent means that intention becomes displaced as pre-requite for what comes to constitute resistance. This is a significant departure from previous Geographical scholarship on resistance which has, as previously outlined, posited intention as a foundational principle of resistance. Indeed, the concern that resistance necessitates conscious intent has been, Hollander and Einwohner (2004) argue, central to debates over whether an act constitutes resistance across the wider Social Sciences.

Engaging with resistance in its emergence unsettles a binary framing of intention, for it necessitates understanding the subject as shot through with multiple, incoherent forces. To be clear, I am not stating that intentionality is not important, but that any relationship between a subject's apparent intention and outcome is non-linear and materially mediated. Intentionality thus becomes "an emergent relation with the world, rather

than an apriori condition of experience" (Ash and Simpson 2016, 48). As a subject emerges through and with the world, so too does any apparent volition. This approach moves away from accounts of intentionality that "implicate the presence of an intentional subject in advance of experience", where a coherent subject is seen to govern through "internal representational thought" (Ash and Simpson 2016, 53; Rose 2006). Importantly here, I am not claiming that a contingent subject cannot make claims to a coherent subjectivity. Instead I refute the assumption that intentionality exists pre-subject: "the compulsory expectation that … actions must be identified from some stable, unified, and agreed-upon identity" (Butler 2006, 21) and turn to conceptualise it as part of an emergent process located within the "perpetual process of subject *formation*" (Ash and Simpson 2016, 56 emphasis as original).

This has implications for (re)animating Geographic debate on who, or what, constitutes a resistant subject. Rereading the narrative of a case that is considered to be intentionally resistant can illuminate what a complication of a intention as a pre-requisite for resistance can bring. I therefore return to the example of Maria Gallagher and Ana Maria Archilla, who intercepted Senator Jeff Flake in the lift over his support for Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanagh. This encounter can be read as oppositional, intentional resistance; a face-to-face interaction between disputing sides. However, this framing is complicated by an interview after the incident, where Gallagher indicated that her accusations were not straightforwardly intended, stating that when running to the lift "I wasn't thinking about what would come next. I had no idea what I was about to say. But when he would not look at me, or the women standing next to me baring her soul, I felt only fury" (Gallagher 2018). To be clear, given that Gallagher and Archilla were waiting to try and speak to Senator Flake, there is intention in this moment, but a complication of intention understood as fixed and linear, which muddies a straightforward reading of the politics of this moment. Attending to the minutiae of how resistance is operating in emergence (and what this means for any apparent coherence), does not deny agency or political subjectivity to the women involved. Instead, as Archilla explained after the incident "I think that Maria [Gallagher] and I were there because others had been there" (Vesoulis 2018). My point here is that the possibility for this moment likely emerged, non-linearly (for no direct causalities can be made here) from the legacies of multiple other events, including expected forms such as the Women's March and the rise of the #metoo movement, but extending beyond this to encompass those moments that may never have congealed into the making of a political claim (the prisoner, the child, the women who stayed at home in her hat). Displacing intention as an apriori delineator of resistance (which, to reiterate, does not deny nor negate intention), allows us to account for moments that do not coalesce to expected form, and yet condition the possibilities for future, as yet unknown, moments, movements and/or political claims to be made.

Attending to resistance as emergent, and destabilising intention as a delineator of resistant (in)action also opens up the possibility for debates on resistance to resonate with the material turn within Geography. Material

agency does not mean that intention is redundant, but instead attending to intention as emergent refocuses where it operates, the politics of this and how we engage with it as a 'marker' of resistance (see Section 4). There are multiple possible implications of thinking resistance through material agency for Geographers, and/or activists, including within collaborative research agendas. Such an approach would necessitate an expansion of what materials are considered woven into narratives of resistance, beyond expected forms (of placards, disruptive artwork, blockages and computer viruses). This re-orientation also means thinking about other – perhaps more unexpected materials – through the lens of resistance. What might it mean to think about the potential of materials to make interruptions that are as-yet unknown? For example Palibroda et al's (2009) photovoice work on women and poverty, in collaboration with urban Aboriginal women in Saskatchewan resulted in displays of photographs in Saskatoon Community Youth Arts Programming Centre, shopping centres, together with presentations at Canadian national conferences, and the Senate committee on poverty. These images were targeted at the poverty policy, but what might thinking of the agency of the photographs in the context of using participatory photovoice, bring to analysis here? Of course, we cannot retrospectively speculate what (if any) impacts this may bring here, but my point here is that framing materials as lively and emergent means thinking through what forms, if any, of resistance may emergence from a material's circulation, associations with other materials and/or subjects. This "unknowability and ambiguity diverges from prevailing accounts of materiality and acts of resistance that have explored the use of materials to intentionally disrupt or intervene within particular configurations of sovereign power" (Hughes and Forman, 2017, 689).

6.3 Ambiguity, and the conditioning of future claims

Rethinking resistance as emergent, accepting the irrevocably entangled potentiality of all relations, and therefore decentering intentionality as a delineator of resistance, means that there is ambiguity in what comes to be termed 'resistant'. This is because in refusing to predetermine the form of resistance apriori alternative subjectivities and materialities can be woven into narratives of resistance. During my own research within UK immigration removal centres, a moment arose in a music workshop put on for both staff and detainees that exemplified this ambiguity. 'Joseph[1]', a staff member managing the workshop, was from the same country as many of the detainees present. In the workshop he shared the same childhood songs, language and musical traditions as the detainees (Hughes 2016). Joseph's interaction with the detainees does not fit with the expected resistant subject for he is a staff member with his own migration journey: "It is not possible to capture this legacy, it is potential and in this potential, the ambiguous positioning that Joseph embodies escapes from the governing lines of in/exclusion drawn by the state." (Hughes 2016, 434).

[1] Joseph is a pseudonym.

Reducing moments such as these, by categorising them as to whether or not they can be considered resistance, ignoring the multiplicities, complexities and ambiguities that emerge here. As Amoore and Hall (2013, 106) note, "incompleteness, uncertainty, and indeterminacy are the condition of possibility for the making of political claims". A world of complete certainty and determined futures would constitute a fully administered world with no possibility for politics and no space for a political claim to be made. This ambiguity can open up glimpses of alternative possible futures. These futures may not be politically progressive, and yet they can serve to reconfigure and negotiate power-resistance entanglements (this can also been seen in Melville's (1853) tale of "Bartleby, the Scrivener" who states 'I would prefer not to' to his employer's demands (1853, see Agamben 1998, 1999) . Furthermore, an attention to the multiplicity of entanglements of resistance forces a focus on how an act, encounter or thought can be both resistant and compliant, and therefore how settling on it as 'resistance' can ignore the very potentialities and ambiguities that serve to unsettle any definitive sense of what the future might bring and the opening up of new possibilities for political claims (Squire 2017). The shared histories and language between staff member Joseph and the detainees is provided ambiguous moments where the certainty of their exclusion was disrupted: "its very unknowability […] challenged and resisted the certainty of the production of a governable political order (Hughes 2016, 435).

This disruption of certainty is political. It is not necessarily, however, politically progressive. As Grosz argues "[i]f the future revolution can carry no guarantee that it will improve the current situation or provide something preferable to what exists now, what makes it a sought-fore idea? What prevents it from blurring into facism or conservatism?" (1999, 17). This is by no means to suggest that challenging inequalities should not be a driving force behind scholarly attention to resistance, but instead to note that the assumption of linearity, towards an end goal is bound up in predetermined forms of resistance (and activism, see Horton and Kraftl 2009). Yet, is an explicit causal link to change required for an (in)action to be considered resistance? Closs Stephens, writing on the time of the political notes that "[t]he technique of shackling the future into a particular mode of politics therefore assumes that we can know in advance what liberation must look like, suggesting that there is a timeless ideal that we can arrive at if only we continue to focus on the journey ahead […] [t]he challenge, then, is to encourage a more open and pluralistic understanding of the present in order to be able to be responsive to new ideas, possibilities and solidarities" (2013, 118). Applying such a temporal politics to those variously engaged in the Women's March 2017, means that whilst no simple causations can be made, the context of the conditions of possibility opened up by their (in)actions become woven into accounts of resistance. The role of resistance here then, is not to detract, prescribe, the boundaries of what counts, meaning that there is value in keeping the future open, in preventing "politics…[becoming] a lost object, a foregone conclusion, concluded" (Berlant 2011, 232).

Remaining with ambiguity, through a focus upon resistance as emergent can therefore productively intersect with, and develop work in Geography engaging with anticipatory futures (Collier 2008, Gibson-Graham 2008, Anderson 2010, Amoore 2013, Adey and Anderson 2011, Kinsley 2012, Kraftl and Horton 2018,). Whilst it is beyond the scope of this paper to outline in full all scholarship that engages with this scholarship, it important to signal that engaging with resistance as an emergent practice is ontologically compatible with work outside of Geography on utopian futures and resistance (Sargisson 2000, Karides 2012, Walter 2011, Erdi Lelandais 2014).

With this in mind, it is productive to ground my call for engaging with resistance as an emergent practice within scholarship already engaged in the politics of pre-emption. For example, the "generative and world making capacities of contemporary algorithms" (Amoore and Raley 2017, 3) which are put to work to anticipate multiple possible futures: "the contemporary politics of possibility marks a change in emphasis from the statistical calculation of probability to the algorithmic arraying of possibilities such that they can be acted upon" (Amoore 2013, 23). This approach has been explored in the context of smart cities, biometric borders and predictive policing, and I suggest that it may be helpful to bring this into narratives of resistance. For example, White (2016, 572) argues that the future is "recruited, rearranged, and represented" by consultancy firms for smart cities to justify technological interventions as present forms of urban governance. How could resistance fit within such an anticipatory governance framework? Here, drawing upon the work of Amoore (2013, 157) is productive, as for her, the role of critique becomes how to "sustain potentiality itself, how to keep open the indeterminate, the unexpected place and the knowable subject". In the context of White's (2016) analysis of the anticipatory logics woven through the governance of smart cities, taking such an approach to resistance could be precisely this refusal to commit to the stability of form, to keep open the future to that which is as-yet unimagined.

7. Conclusion

I began this paper with a provocation and a question arising from the 2017 Women's March on Washington D.C. I asked how Geographers can engage with moments – a women who wore her pink 'pussy hat' at home, the women who supported the march from her prison cell and the child who marched but did not really know why - that may never congeal into a particular recognizable resistant form and yet they condition the possibility for *future* claims to be made. How too, I asked, should Geographers recognize in our accounts of resistance that those marching could not have known the full implications of their actions? The possibility for Maria Gallagher and Ana Maria Archilla's encounter with Senator Flake, may for example, have emerged discordantly from the legacy of the Women's March, but it extends beyond those who protested in that 'moment that became a movement', to include those actions which did not cohere to an expectant resistance

form. In attending to these questions, my provocation is that Geography has remained uncritically attached to particular accounts of resistance which has resulted in an impasse in our conceptual engagement with the term in the last decade. The implications of this are a reduction of multiplicity, a grounding in intentionality and a focus upon oppositional framings. In short, the *form* of resistant actions, and the associated subjects, materials and spaces associated with them are determined in advance.

I call instead for Geographers to engage with resistance in its emergence. Meaningfully tracing resistance in emergence means attending to the *we* who recognise resistance. It also raises important questions on the contested politics of the use of the term resistance, which I hope that reanimating debate on resistance will open up. It requires a decentering of intentionality, and therefore an expansion of both the form of subjects and materials considered resistant, together with an acknowledgement of their incoherence. To reiterate, a move from form to emergence, does not mean a collapsing of the political purchase, effectiveness or impacts of the different forms that resistance may, or may not take. It is important to pay attention to form. However, the argument I have made here is to rethink form as 'the' marker of resistance. This approach resonates with work in Geography that already unpacks the politics of emergence, including – but not limited to – scholarship on austerity, laughter, troubling of activist subject, lively materials and anticipatory futures. This means rethinking moments that may never cohere to anticipated form, as resistance. Geographers could therefore begin to address the current impasse in accounts of resistance by taking seriously the ambiguous, unremarkable, (un)intentional subjects, materials and practices which contain the potential to keep open the conditions for future claims to be made.

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[i] I use the term ‘logic’ to signal an organizing approach that has come to guide how resistance is framed (Anderson 2010).